

**MINUTES OF THE
COMMUNITY REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY
SPECIAL WORKSHOP OF FEBRUARY 6th, 2008
DEBERRY ROOM 3RD FLOOR
200 CANAL STREET
NEW SMYRNA BEACH, FLORIDA**

Chairperson Linda DeBorde called the February 6th, 2008 special workshop to order at 1:00 p.m.

**Answering to roll call:
Linda DeBorde, Chairperson
Steve Dennis, Vice Chair
Douglas Hodson
Cynthia Lybrand
Charles Belote**

Also present were Mark Rakowski, Interim CRA Director; Kevin Fall, CRA Project Manager; Noleen Foster, CRA Coordinator; Mark Hall, CRA Attorney; and Claudia Soulie, CRA Board Secretary. CRA Commissioner James Kosmas arrived at 1:05 pm and CRA Commissioner Thomas Williams was absent.

1. ESTHER STREET PROJECT

Mr. John Hagood, City Manager stated that during FY 2006/07 the City had acquired a southern part parcel of Esther Street and now the City was interested in acquiring the northern part of this parcel, since this acquisition would have multi-faceted benefits, such as stormwater management, beach access, parking facilities and would be beneficial to the CRA district and the Community. Mr. Hagood handed out information pertaining to a Community Budget Issue Request (CBIR) to be sent to Tallahassee and commented that, with Mr. Rakowski's assistance, he was able to secure funding from the Florida Communities Trust for about \$2.7 million, and from Volusia County for about \$1.3 Million. The City needed \$395,000 to meet the revised acquisition cost of \$4.4 million. This CBIR would go through the Legislative process and would be a Legislative Budget item that has already been endorsed by Representative Hukill and Senator Lynn. Mr. Hagood continued that the Esther Street Project would be discussed at the next City Commission meeting and requested the CRA's funding of \$395,000 and, once the \$395,000 were reimbursed through the legislative appropriate Mr. Hagood would recommend to the City Commission that the \$395,000 be reimbursed to the CRA's Trust Fund.

Ms. DeBorde asked when Mr. Hagood anticipated the grant to be funded through the Legislative sessions. Mr. Hagood answered that the State's budget started July 1st; the funding could be towards the end of the year but he felt that they would know by the end of May if funding were made available through Tallahassee.

Mr. Dennis inquired if the actual expenditure would be out of the FY 2008/09 budget. Mr. Hagood stated that the City Commission was to approve a contract with the Trust for Public Lands (TPL), a not for profit organization out of Tallahassee, to act as an intermediary between the City and the property owner and to purchase the property for the City. Mr. Hagood continued that the City had ninety- (90) days from the date of the contract to purchase the property and was hopeful that the acquisition would happen by July 2008.

Mr. Belote asked if the CRA's participation could positively or negatively affect the ability to get the CBIR grant and if the grant did not get approved, would the CRA have funded the whole portion. Mr. Hagood felt that the CRA's participation would not be a factor and stated that the CRA would have paid less than ten (10) percent for this parcel.

Ms. DeBorde pointed out that this was the first time she had seen the conceptual design and asked the other Commissioners if they were familiar with the project. All agreed that this was news to them. Mr. Hagood stated that this conceptual plan, even though modified a few times, was basically still within the original design concept from about two (2) years ago. He continued that Volusia County had a "standard" participation of \$25,000 per parking space for like projects, and the City had identified fifty-three parking spaces for the Esther Street project.

Mr. Kosmas felt that a little decision time was needed, since this would be a large financial commitment by the CRA and inquired if this could be detrimental to the project. Mr. Hagood stated that this project had been deferred in the past, this was a fluctuating real estate market and people were getting anxious to proceed.

There was discussion between staff, Mr. Hagood and the Board about the original acquisition price, why the price had been lowered, the construction of a new seawall, balancing of the City's budget, structuring of \$395,000 as a loan to the City as not to deplete the CRA's contingency budget at once and the perceived benefits to the City and the community in acquiring these parcels.

The CRA Board was very hesitant about the fact that there were no guarantees that the their contingency budget would be reimbursed for the \$395,000, possibly leaving the CRA vulnerable in being able to fund future projects if necessary. Mr. Hagood suggested making the CRA's motion contingent upon the City Commission reimbursing the CRA, should the CBIR be honored by Tallahassee and stated that Volusia County had expressed interest in financially participating in the construction of the project should it be acquired by the City.

Ms. DeBorde expressed concern about the CRA's budget appearing well stocked due to monies carrying-over from already allocated projects that take some time to be completed. Ms. DeBorde emphasized that, should the City Commission require the CRA to fund certain projects, workshops should be held to inform the CRA. She did not want to give the impression that the CRA was trying to hinder projects, but wanted to point out that the CRA had to be frugal with their budget in order to do the job expected of them.

The Board came to the consensus to defer discussion of this item to the CRA Regular meeting immediately following this workshop.

Ms. DeBorde welcomed Mayor Sally Mackay. Mayor Mackay asked to address the Board and expressed her support for the Esther Street project and what it could do for the community and the merchants in this area.

2. PROJECT PRIORIZATION

a) Current and Approved CRA Projects

Mr. Fall handed out a map depicting the current CRA district and asked the Board to refer to the CRA Project List spreadsheet in their Workshop Agendas that listed the majority of the Capital Projects funded in the current CRA budget. Mr. Fall also commented on the spreadsheet for the CRA's Revenue Projections from FY 2009 to FY 2015. Mr. Fall observed that the CRA's first round of projects were coming to the end of their "useful lives" and would need to be re-evaluated for renovations, which would have to be funded. Mr. Fall's main goal was to get the CRA Commissioners to prioritize the projects in order of importance and to map out a plan of action for the next three (3) to five (5) years as well as appropriating the allotted CRA budget for FY2008-09.

Mr. Fall stated that the following projects should be added to the project list for consideration:

- 3rd Avenue Entrance Feature
- Masterplan Update
- Landbanking – contingency budget for possible property acquisition
US 1 and Canal Street
- Under-grounding overhead power lines (specifically 431 Canal Street)
- Improving parking and drainage
- Amphitheater at Riverside Park
- Historic Fire Suppression Grant – for sprinkler installation in Historic Buildings
- Wayfinding System – improve consistent directional program to and from
Activity Centers throughout CRA
- Design Guidelines – Architectural requirements

b) Current and Approved CRA Projects

Mr. Fall informed the CRA that West Canal Street funded at \$ 2.6 million and Mary Avenue was at a stage advanced enough where it did not need to be prioritized.

Additionally, Mr. Fall stated that the Flagler Boardwalk Request for Proposal (RFP) was changed at the City's request to a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) with a \$200,000 maximum budget. Mr. Fall stated that he would like to see parking space definition of the Flagler Avenue parking lot to eliminate congestion brought on by cars being parked in no specific order.

Ms. DeBorde stated that this organization of the parking lot may not be feasible and Mr. Rakowski felt that it was necessary to maintain open spaces for other possible uses.

Mr. Fall pointed out that South Orange Street was close to 100% design and staff was awaiting final comment from the design consultants. Mr. Fall went over the various funding sources for the South Orange Street project being \$484,000 from 2007 appropriation, \$100,000 City's General Fund and \$416,000 out of the FY 2008 budget.

Mr. Fall inquired if the new name of Medical Services Area (fka Hospital District) was acceptable to the Board, which Mr. Dennis affirmed. Mr. Fall reiterated that \$100,000 had been appropriated to this project for the purpose of getting connectivity to Canal Street through street, sidewalk and drainage improvements.

Mr. Fall commented on the Old Fort Park wall and landscaping for the park. The plan was to not touch the crack in the wall until a grant was received from the State, but the CRA could go ahead with the landscaping. There was some discussion between staff and the Board about reviewing pictures and a report from back in the mid 1980's that depicted the crack in the wall and its ever so slight progression. Ms DeBorde was concerned that any repairs, should they not be absolutely necessary and/or well guided by knowledgeable persons, might change the wall's historic value and significance.

Mr. Fall stated that \$40,000 had been appropriated through a grant from the Florida Recreation Development Assistance Program (FRDAP) for the improvements the Coronado Civic Center. Furthermore, \$100,000 was appropriated for the Flagler Avenue side streets and Mr. Fall thought it an excellent idea to pick one of the side streets as a pilot program. Ms. DeBorde would like to see this item move up in priority.

Mr. Fall commented on the yearly appropriation amounts for Street Furniture, Public Art, Property Improvement-, Residential and Marketing grants.

Mr. Rakowski asked the Board for their thoughts and ideas on projects that should be added to or deleted from the list. Mr. Kosmas stated that the CRA had a tremendous opportunity to influence the direction of the community and he would like to take a look at a redevelopment plan for the waterfront area starting at the municipal boat ramp to the Brannon Center. He felt that this area was very underutilized and would make great public areas, open spaces and restaurants. Mr. Kosmas continued that the boat ramp location / access needed to be reconsidered to facilitate parking. Mr. Dennis believed that the project at the old High School site would impact those ramps since some elements of this project were water related and felt that it should be added to the project list even though it was out of the CRA district. Mr. Rakowski added that the owners of Seaharvest had expressed interest in coming up with their own master plan. There was additional discussion about traffic / parking issues, the former High School project and ways to generate revenue through parking fees, finding possible ways to beautify the medians and roadways on SR 44 and US1 even though the majority of them are not within the CRA district.

Staff discussed the timeliness in creating a new budget and the need for it to be flexible, possible costs of undergrounding the utilities within the district, necessary prioritization

within the undergrounding, a possible budget amount and what would be the best way for the CRA Commissioners to rate the listed projects. Staff made the suggestion to send requests for project prioritization to each of the CRA members.

Further discussion ensued about Mary Avenue and Flagler Boardwalk being on the top of the priority list, a possible timeline for S. Orange Avenue project, its traffic flow and if there was any priority other than drainage issues associated with this project.

Mr. Hall, CRA Attorney, gave suggestions on how to prioritize the projects in an open meeting without conflicting with the Sunshine laws. A consensus was reached for staff to email the project list to all Commissioners for their review. Further discussion followed about including business attraction and retention to the list of projects, especially for Canal Street and Flagler Avenue.

Mr. Kosmas asked if the Board was considering amending the allotted amounts of certain CRA projects and that brought on a discussion about pulling money from lower ranked projects to aid higher ranked ones.

Ms. DeBorde thanked everyone for the ideas and comments.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Dennis made a motion to adjourn the workshop; seconded by Mr. Hodson, all agreed. Meeting adjourned at 2:45 pm.